

NEWSLETTER

**for the Churches of St Arvans, St Mary, Penterry,
St Deiniol, Itton, St James, Devauden & Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg
forming part of the Severn Wye Ministry Area**

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is open during the day both for worship, private prayer and a time of stillness.

Our current live-streamed services are as follows:: Sunday Eucharist at 10.

a.m., and it can be accessed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/> and available to watch later

There is a online only reflection, meditation and celebration of Night Prayer (Compline) on Tuesdays at 7 p.m..

The St Arvans Parish website can be found here:

<http://www.starvanschurch.org.uk/>

Please help to keep us informed of anyone who is in need or is isolated over the next weeks and months, and anyone in need of our prayer and support

Fr Michael Gollop,

The Vicarage, St Arvans

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23rd August 2026 The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Listen to me, you that pursue

righteousness, you that seek the LORD. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples. I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be for ever, and my deliverance will never be ended. [51. 1-6]

Reader / This is the Word of the Lord

Response / Thanks be to God

Psalm 138

R/ O Lord, your love endures for ever;

I will give thanks to you, O Lord,
with my whole heart;
before the gods I will sing your praise.
I will bow down towards your holy temple
and praise your name,
because of your love and faithfulness;
For you have glorified your name
and your word above all things.

R/ O Lord, your love endures for ever;

When I called, you answered me;
you increased my strength within me.
All the kings of the earth
will praise you, O Lord,

when they have heard
the words of your mouth.

They will sing of the ways of the Lord,
that great is the glory of the Lord.
Though the Lord be high,
he cares for the lowly;
he perceives the haughty from afar.

R/ O Lord, your love endures for ever;

Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you keep me safe;
you stretch forth your hand
against the fury of my enemies;
your right hand shall save me.
The Lord will make good
his purpose for me;
O Lord, your love endures for ever;
do not abandon the works of your hands.

R/ O Lord, your love endures for ever;

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [12. 1-8]

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Reader/ This is the Word of the Lord
Response / Thanks be to God

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church.

And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it

Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:

And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

[16. 13–20]

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ

For Your Prayers

That we may deepen our lives of prayer and devotion.

All on holiday and all who travel

Those preparing for or celebrating their marriage

Peace and reconciliation
in our own society

The peoples of Palestine and Gaza, Israel and the wider Middle East and the Persian Gulf. For peace and justice throughout the region.

For world leaders – for wisdom, restraint and respect for human life.

The government & people of Ukraine

and a just and peaceful end to Russia's war of aggression there.

All those without adequate food or shelter
Those who suffer as a result
of the climate emergency & for
responsible stewardship of our planet
For compassion and responsibility
in those elected to govern us.
For migrants & refugees, and all forced
to flee from their homelands

For the Church:

For the bishops of the Church:
Cherry, Bishop of Monmouth, &
Archbishop of Wales; the Episcopal Visitor
of the Society of the Holy Cross in Wales,
& for all who hold and teach the Catholic
faith that comes to us from the Apostles.
All bishops, priests and deacons and all
baptised Christians
For the reunion of all Christians:
for Pope Leo, for Orthodox Patriarch
Bartholomew, & for the leaders of the
Reformed traditions
For the Severn Wye Ministry Area,
for its priests, licensed lay ministers
and all its people.

For the Sick & those in need:

Roy Staples, Ralph Hamilton, Sylvia
Jackson; The Revd Helen Rodwell;
Elisabeth; Mary; Margaret; Althea; Margi
& Bob Osborne; Jenny Sherwood, Bob
Main, Diane Parnell;

For the Departed:

The recently departed; our own departed
loved ones, and those whose
anniversaries of death fall this week:
Dorothy Farley, Margaret Mitchell,
Tanya Blanchard, Garry Wood.

A Prayer of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are
in the Blessed Sacrament.
I love you above all things,
and I long for you in my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you
sacramentally, come at least
spiritually into my heart.
As though you have already come,
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to
you; never permit me
to be separated from you. Amen.
(The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament)

The Jereboam Interview

*We continue our series of extracts
from the Jerusalem and Galilee
Gazette, an imaginary first-century
newspaper. Week by week, the
correspondent Jereboam interviews
people whose lives have been affected
in some way by Jesus Christ and his
teaching*

Mahalon

Jereboam: So what's new in the life
of the Church?

Mahalon: Well, we've been
hearing a lot recently about what a
wonderful gift faith is. Several of the elders
have been praising the faith of Abraham,
for example.

Jereboam: You know...forgive my
rudeness...I never quite see the point of
commending faith like that. Presumably
the idea is to encourage you to believe
more fervently, but that doesn't really
make sense. Teach people about your
faith, by all means. Encourage them to
express their faith through good works:
fine...but telling them to believe more
strongly – well, surely they can't achieve
that just by trying harder, can they?

Mahalon: It's not quite like that.
We reassure one another about the value
of our faith, encouraging ourselves to
have the confidence to believe. That's
important. If you're surrounded by enough
people who regard your faith as
unnecessary or inadequate in some way,
their opinions can easily start to affect
you. Listen to this: one of our friends was
recently advised that she ought to give up
her belief in Jesus and her membership of
the Church. Apparently she'd become
healthier!

Jereboam: What? That's a strange
attitude...

Mahalon: It is an extreme
example. But even in everyday life you
encounter little criticisms or jokes made at
your expense. Sometimes they're
genuinely meant in a friendly way, and
you like to think that you can laugh them
off, but eventually this all starts to have an
impact, wearing you down. Then your faith
begins to become cautious, wary...it's
blunted, if you like. That's one reason why
the Church is so important, and why we
need to remember the glorious faith of our
forefathers. Their resolve reminds us what

is possible, encourages us to trust our convictions, and – how can I put this – it urges us to let faith trickle into every last corner of our being.

Jereboam: I see.

Mahalon: ...and by the way I didn't think you were being rude at all.

Jereboam: Thank you.

THIS WEEK

On Sunday the first reading from Isaiah offers the story of the faithful servant Eliakim, who will be given the keys for his master's palace. Paul's brief reading from the Letter to the Romans is a moving prayer filled with awe at the depth and unknowing ways of our Lord. In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus asks his followers what people are saying about him. Then he asks the real question, "Who do you say I am?" Peter's direct answer, "You are the Christ" prompts Jesus' reply that Peter would be given the keys to the kingdom of heaven and would be the rock of faith on which he would build his Church.

Monday is the Feast of St. Bartholomew, Apostle. Thursday is the feast day of Saint Monica and Friday that of Monica's son, Saint Augustine, bishop and doctor of the Church. Saturday is the commemoration of the Martyrdom of Saint John the Baptist, with its own readings.

For the first readings at the Eucharist this week, we begin with a few selections from the second letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians, and then we move to readings from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians for the next several weeks.

We continue to reflect on Jesus' words from St Matthew's Gospel Jesus condemns the ways of the Pharisees, calling them hypocrites, "blind guides" and "whitened tombs:" "on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing." In contrast to the ways of the hypocrites, Jesus tells his disciples to "Stay awake!" We are called to be faithful and prudent servants, stewards of what our Master has entrusted to us. If we are this kind of disciples, we will be blessed. Then he tells them the Parable of the talents. A master goes off on a journey, entrusting his wealth to three servants. Two invest the money and earn twice as much for their master. The third, out of fear and laziness,

won't take any risks and buries his master's wealth, which was entrusted to him.

Next Sunday: We see a glimpse of the Prophet Jeremiah who understands the pain of following the Lord and decides not to speak the Lord's name again, "but then it becomes like fire burning in my heart." Paul's letter to the Romans encourages those ancient Romans - and us - not to conform to this age but to discern the will of God. In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus corrects his disciples' resistance to his own passion and death, telling them that if they try to save their lives, they'll lose them. "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

A Homily for Trinity 12

+ In today's Gospel Jesus asks his disciples: '*Who do people say that the Son of Man is?*'

And it's an important question. Jesus doesn't ask it in a casual way - just throwing out a request for the latest gossip, but - because *who he is* is so central to his mission, he wants to know what people are actually saying about him. And his disciples respond by saying, '*Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.*' - that is, someone in a long line of those who had witnessed to the reality of God and have proclaimed it to the people of Israel, those in the popular religious feeling of the time were somehow expected to return and herald the liberation of the people of God at the end of the world.

But Jesus doesn't leave it at that: he says to his disciples - and I suppose this means those closest to him, the Apostles: '*But who do you say that I am?*' That is, it's all very well to repeat what other people are saying about me, but you - you who are closest to me - you who know me best - who do you say that I am?

And Peter's response is very clear: '*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*'

Peter recognises that Jesus isn't simply one of the long line of prophets, but is the Christ - literally 'the anointed one' who stands in a completely unique relationship with the Father - essentially the confession of faith which we ourselves will repeat (in a more developed form put

together by the Church Fathers) when we stand and say the Nicene Creed in a few minutes' time.

Peter's declaration of faith has the quality of truth - as Jesus himself says of an insight, not just acquired naturally by living in close proximity with him, but by a divine revelation which brings human understanding, a knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures, and sheer gut instinct together. It stands with those other ringing statements of belief made by Peter's fellow Apostle, Thomas in St John's Gospel when he is finally confronted with the reality of Christ's resurrection: "My Lord and my God." And, again related by John, the comment of Martha before Jesus brings her brother Lazarus back to life - "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God."

And the *timing* of Peter's statement is also important, because it happens just before the Transfiguration, when he and the other inner core apostles, James and John, see Christ in his glory as an anticipation of the Resurrection and seen in the company of Moses and Elijah. In other words Christ isn't only the latest in the long line of God's messengers - or the reincarnation of one of them - but is himself the fulfilment of everything that had been promised by God from the beginning. And, then, allied with the Transfiguration, comes Jesus' prediction of the necessity of his own death in order to fulfil his divine mission. And he follows it up with the his call for all his followers to unite themselves to him in his death and resurrection: to die to ourselves in order to live for him and with him.

But - let's go back to the beginning - that question of Jesus: '*But who do you say that I am?*' has an importance far beyond its immediate context - in other words it's addressed to us as well as to his first disciples - it's *the* existential question which is addressed to every individual in every time and place: 'Who do *you* say that I am.'

Every age - every historical era - perhaps even every generation - has had its own view of what we might call the "who, what and why" of God. Human culture changes, evolves, uses the kinds of imagery and story-telling which is relevant to its needs and its situation. That's inevitable, of course - the message is one which we need to be able to understand, even if the reality remains the same. But that's not an

invitation to have our own subjective or esoteric opinion of who Jesus might be in the scheme of God's plan for the world. It's quite clear from the Lord's reply to Peter's response, 'You are the Christ, the son of the living God' that not every opinion of him is equally valid: *'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.'*

So we can't regard Jesus as just a great spiritual teacher, only a great moral and ethical human example to follow, he's not just another in the line of Jewish prophets and messengers. We may come across him in that way in the beginning, but it's not enough.

The question we're presented with today, is an invitation to reflect upon our own relationship with Christ. *Who do we think he is?* How do we encounter him in our lives? Who is Jesus for us? It's an invitation to reflect on a tradition of faith which says quite clearly that he is God's own answer to the deepest questions and longings of the human heart. It's an invitation through prayer and service to explore and deepen that relationship, to find out what that actually means in practice for each one of us.

'Who do you say that I am' is the most crucial question of all. And we can only really answer it not by what we say, but what we do – by the way we live our lives.

+

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.

Saturday September 12th

and usually every second Saturday of the month

Childrens activity table

Mega Mondays
Saints, Chepstow
August 24th 10 a.m – 12 noon
St Mary's Priory, Chepstow
Crafts, games & fun for the summer holidays

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

The Twelfth Sunday

after Trinity

23rd August 2026

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist
at St Arvan's

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at St Deiniol's, Itton

NEXT SUNDAY

The Twelfth Sunday

after Trinity

23rd August 2026

10 a.m. Liturgy of the Word
at St Arvan's

Readings:

Jeremiah 15.15-21

Psalms 26.1-8

Romans 12.9-21

St Matthew 16.21-28

Please note: the Eucharist will be celebrated at St Arvans on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday at 10

For all services in the wider Ministry Area please see www.severnwyema.co.uk

The Ministry Area Prayer Group

Thursdays at 7.45 – 9.00 p.m.

From 9th April until 24th September 2026 we will be meeting in Churches around the Ministry Area:

27th August St. Thomas Becket, Shirenewton

3rd September St. Andoenus, Mounton

10th September St. James, Devauden

17th September St. Peter, St. Pierre

24th September St. Christopher, Chepstow

Please join us, everyone is welcome and no experience is necessary!

Please contact David

on 07887 853479

(david-carne@outlook.com)

for any prayers that you would like us

to include or for any questions that you have.

Daily Prayer this week

Like physical exercises, which build strength and stamina, these exercises for finding intimacy with God in our everyday lives involve a practice régime. Nobody ever got good at soccer or baseball, running or dancing, without careful practice that becomes a habit, a way of life. And, no one even attempts such a regimen without great desire. The same is true with getting good at having a relationship with our Lord. It takes great desire to sustain a routine of reflection and affective, intimate conversation. Such prayerful focus and connectedness takes discipline, but it quickly becomes natural. And, the rewards are phenomenal.

We can practice this week by asking ourselves some deep questions in the background of our life each day. Beginning each day by briefly expressing a desire to be more self-aware and transparent with our Lord, we can ask ourselves some probing questions.

In what ways am I a hypocrite? How do I use a double standard - harsher on others than I am on myself? How do I like to appear as a religious person, but actually lack mercy and deeds of charity? Am I a good steward of the gifts with which God has entrusted me?

As I grow in the ability to reflect throughout the day, I might try to recognize my inner spirit, my attitudes, the ways I respond. It is a way of staying alert, and it places me with my Lord in conversation, in the background as I make decisions, as I experience my reactions to events and people. Sometimes, I might just be saying "Thank you, Lord," expressing gratitude for what I've been given. At other times, that will quickly turn to a reflection on how I will be a good steward of those gifts. Hearing the readings this week, I might want to monitor how my fears or my laziness might prevent me from being bold about using the gifts the Lord has given me to build up the Kingdom in my world. Preparing to celebrate God's love on Sunday, I can focus on the readings and wonder at how the fire burns in my own

heart. I can ponder the question Jesus asks me: What good would it do to gain the whole world but lose my very self?

Help me, Lord, to hear your word to me, even when it challenges me. Open my heart and guide me to use my talents to serve you. Teach me to be generous, Lord.

*With thanks to Creighton University's
Online Ministries (adapted)*

Devauden Photography Competition 2026

We STILL want to see your best photograph!

What is the best photograph you have taken recently?

What picture are you most proud of?

Perhaps you haven't taken it yet!

It could be a landscape, a sunset, your family in their finest (or in their PJ's), your dog, the view from your window, a still life, or some wildlife!

There will be an exhibition of the entries in St James' Church in September, and the 12 best pictures will be made into a calendar for 2027

How do you enter?

We can only accept digital photographs, so please email devauden.photos@gmail.com with your best photograph by Sunday 6th September.

If you are under 16, please let us know when your picture is emailed in by your parent or responsible adult.